

## Giants, others ready to enforce SF's smokeless tobacco ban

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San Francisco's ban on smokeless tobacco at sports venues extends to the Giants' AT&T Park, but the team said it's "happy to comply" with the law passed Tuesday.

San Francisco's first-in-the-nation legislation striking out smokeless tobacco at all baseball and athletic fields citywide has agencies from the Recreation and Park Department to the San Francisco Giants preparing to step up to the plate by the Jan. 1 effective date.

The ordinance, unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, amends The City's health code to prohibit smokeless tobacco usage by athletes and fans alike anywhere at sports venues, including AT&T Park, and sets a new precedent in the country, advocates say.

San Francisco banned smoking on fields and in parks in 2006, then e-cigarettes last April, but Supervisor Mark Farrell, a former tobacco-chewing college baseball player, said he proposed the smokeless ban to protect youth from the tobacco industry's decades-long advertising message that success in baseball and chewing tobacco go hand in hand.

While ordinances typically go into effect 30 days after the mayor signs them into law, Farrell said he chose Jan. 1 in order to provide adequate time to enforce the rule.

"I do realize this will be a big change," Farrell said.

The Recreation and Park Department will work with the Department of Public Health to develop signage around the smokeless ban for its facilities and seek funding for the signs within this year's budget, said Rec and Park spokeswoman Sarah Ballard.

"It is very helpful to have lead time," Ballard said, adding that the ordinance will be incorporated into the department's field access permitting process.

Smokeless tobacco use "is not terribly high in San Francisco," and the Department of Public Health will deal with violators through a complaint-driven process, said Derek Smith, a health educator with the agency's Tobacco Free Project.

The Giants, whose current roster includes players who chew tobacco, initially said they would support any outcome of the law, whether it was passed or not, and are "happy to comply" at AT&T Park, said team spokeswoman Shana Daum.

"It's all new for us, but I think it can be a positive if it's creating a healthy environment for our

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fans, for our players, just for anybody who is here,” she said. “The intent of it being health-related is what is foremost in our mind.”

In the coming months, the Giants will look into the legislation and the impact on its business before determining how to communicate and implement the change. That includes the level of enforcement among players and fans, who Daum said “are pretty good at self-policing” and have been able to anonymously report existing smoking and e-cigarette violations to guest services at the ballpark.

San Francisco’s ban entered the arena in February at the same time as a state bill that targeted only fields designated for baseball. It’s due to go before its second legislative committee Monday.

Efforts to nix smokeless tobacco across Major League Baseball started five years ago when a dozen national organizations joined together to address youth viewing tobacco-chewing baseball players as role models, said Kevin O’Flaherty, director of advocacy for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids’ northeast region.

Tobacco was banned in the minor leagues in 1993, but its use is subject to collective bargaining in the major leagues. The current agreement expires after the 2016 season.

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Jessica Kwong covers transportation, housing, and ethnic communities, among other topics, for the San Francisco Examiner. She covered City Hall as a fellow for the San Francisco Chronicle, night cops and courts for the San Antonio Express-News, general news for Spanish-language newspapers La Opinión and El Mensajero,... [more](#)

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